



Safer Communities Through Successful Youth

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ABSCOND RISK INSTRUMENT

The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) has developed a tool called the Abscond Risk Instrument (ARI) to assess a juvenile's risk to abscond from Community Supervision. Approximately 11% of ADJC juveniles abscond from Community Supervision, ADJC is working on reducing that number and the ARI is new tool they have added to this important effort.

The ARI is calculated from 11 juvenile characteristics resident within the Criminogenic and Protective Factors Assessment (CAPFA) and offense records. The CAPFA is used for all juveniles committed to the ADJC, and consists of 12 domains and over 180 measures. CAPFA scores are updated every 90 days. Half of the 13 ARI measures are dynamic and were suggested through a comprehensive literature review. The measures include such things as substance dependence and self control. The statistical analyses that produced the ARI followed accepted professional standards.

Two approaches are employed by practitioners involved in assessing risk: clinical methods and actuarial methods. Clinical methods refer to assessments that are based on subjectivity, intuition, or "gut-feelings" when making decisions. Actuarial methods, on the other hand, refer to assessments that are based on theory and research. The ARI is an actuarial method. Because actuarial methods capture factors that are unlikely to be noticed over the course of interviewing offenders and/or reviewing background case files of offenders, actuarial assessment methods have been found to outperform clinical assessment methods in their predictive ability. Most actuarial risk assessment instruments in the correctional context focuses on recidivism and violence. Absconders pose a unique problem for supervisory agencies. Granted, all offenders under correctional supervision are at risk of committing new offenses against the general public when not in secured facilities. The difference for absconders, however, is that high-profile crimes can become a "political nightmare" should it be discovered that the supervisory agency lost track of their subjects. For this reason, high-risk absconders—especially sex offenders—regularly appear on the "most wanted" bulletins of policing and correctional agencies throughout the United States.

The Research and Development Division (R&D) partnered with Mr. David Pyrooz ABD, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Arizona State University, and LeCroy & Milligan and Associates, Inc. to create the ARI. Please contact Dr. John Vivian, Administrator, Research and Development at 602-526-6066 or jvivian@azdjc.gov if you have any questions about the ARI.